



Case Study

When dogfooding is not enough:
QA testing for Headspace's global expansion



Company size:	Growth-stage startup (170 employees)
Company location:	London, UK Santa Monica & San Francisco, California, USA
Testing type:	Functional & Usability
App type:	Mobile (Android & iOS)

About HeadSpace

Founded in London in 2010 by Rich Pierson and Andy Puddicombe, HeadSpace is the leader in app-based guided meditation, with over 18 million downloads in 190 countries across its Android and iOS apps. The app features hundreds of guided meditation sessions, organized in content-rich packs of animations, as well as a social platform to track progress amongst peers.

Preparing for a worldwide release

HeadSpace came to test IO as they were preparing for a worldwide release of their latest app experience: a complete overhaul of the front-end and back-end. The release represented a major milestone for HeadSpace: not only was it a “full facelift” of the product, it also brought all development in-house, and re-wrote the code from scratch with scalability in mind.

Though the app is currently only available in English, the demands of international user growth highlighted the limitations of HeadSpace’s current quality assurance processes. Neel Palrecha, HeadSpace’s Vice President of Engineering, set out to find a solution that would accelerate their QA process and provide on-demand testing on devices that their QA team did not have. HeadSpace found this in test IO.

With five internal QA team members spread across four cross-functional squads, HeadSpace’s Quality Assurance Lead, Luke Johnson explained that all tickets are tested with everyone from product managers to the founders pitching in. By using test IO for broad end-to-end testing and focusing on-demand testers on the “happy paths,” HeadSpace’s internal QA is able to focus narrowly on specific feature testing and edge cases.



“Our company mission is the health and happiness of the world, not just everyone with an iPhone 7.”

- Luke Johnson, Quality Assurance Lead

Testing outside the employee device pool

Like many young technology companies, Headspace's first testers are employees, who live in major metropolitan areas, are technologically savvy, and are, of course, gainfully employed. They tend to have newer, higher-end devices and keep them up-to-date, generally limiting Headspace's internal testing pool to the latest iPhones and Android devices. Headspace knew that they needed to start doing more rigorous cross-device testing -- especially across less exclusive, globally popular, and older devices -- in order to ensure a high-quality experience for the international demographics from which they are seeing explosive growth.

Once Headspace started their first tests with test IO's crowd, they quickly realized that the types of device that they could be and needed to be testing was much larger than originally anticipated. test IO's device insights showed marked differences in the types of phones users have access to. This had a clear impact on making Headspace work in all the markets they are targeting.

"There is a market for devices that are lower priced, with lower specs, lower memory, and they have an underlying issue using Headspace seamlessly. We need to be able to serve our content and product to those people on those devices."

- Luke Johnson, Quality Assurance Lead

The right partner for crunch time

As the release deadline drew closer, Headspace engineers worked in shifts around the clock (sometimes literally through the entire night) to make sure they hit their deadlines. test IO gave Headspace's product team the on-demand QA feedback they needed while under pressure. This rapid feedback was instrumental to helping the team achieve an on-time international release.

In particular, bug reports from test IO's professional QA testers provide the technical information needed to pinpoint issues. They always include screenshots, step-by-step descriptions of issues, and device and operating system details, which can be hard to get from customers and non-technical testers. This reduces the amount of back-and-forth and enables developers to trace the root cause of a bug and repair it faster.



Speed Up Iteration

Unlock the QA bottleneck with an army of graded testers, and allow for faster deployment by letting developers focus on development.



Test On Real Devices

Make sure your software works under real-world conditions. Check apps and websites on a vast variety of everyday devices, 24/7.



Discover Critical Bugs

Let our professional human testers find bugs no autoamted test would find.



“In the end, test IO gave us confidence.”

- Luke Johnson, Quality Assurance Lead

Growing internal adoption

Having won over Headspace’s QA team, both product and engineering are starting to use the test IO platform to embed human-driven testing in their workflows. From developers testing feature-level builds, to product managers checking UI assumptions and more -- having an internationally diverse group of QA testers available on-demand opens the door to new use cases that will help the team at Headspace more efficient and effective in their processes as our partnership matures.

Luke Johnson’s goal is to have test IO become a universal practice at Headspace. From designers running UX tests to developers running a smoke test, everyone working on Headspace will be able to check their assumptions and shorten the feedback cycle.

To this end, Headspace is using test IO’s JIRA integration to allow their cross-functional feature squads to use human testers without leaving their regular project tracking tool.

“We felt immense value throughout our launch having this type of rapid response in the dev & QA cycle.”

- Luke Johnson, Quality Assurance Lead

About test IO

test IO helps software teams ship high-quality software faster.

As a global leader in software crowdtesting, we enable fast-moving software development teams with a platform for on-demand QA testing throughout the entire development cycle. Test setup takes just minutes, and we dynamically allocate human testers in real-world conditions to fit your specific testing needs. No more QA bottlenecks at the end of your sprints -- test IO makes software teams both faster, and more flexible.

Our community of tens of thousands of professional QA testers ensures on-demand availability when you need testing, and guarantees coverage across all the devices, operating systems, regions and languages that matter to you. Test results are delivered in as little as an hour within the development tools you already have in place, or via web app.

Founded in Berlin in 2011, test IO is headquartered in San Francisco, and is the trusted testing partner of leading companies such as Lonely Planet, Thumbtack, Barneys NY, and Carnival Cruise Line.

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